

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Little Tennessee River Basin Recognized for Native Fish Conservation

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Recognizing its incredible diversity of stream life and years of efforts to conserve that diversity, the Little Tennessee River basin has been designated the nation's first Native Fish Conservation Area.

In 2008, Trout Unlimited, the Federation of Fly Fishers, and the Fisheries Conservation Foundation came together to develop a new way to approach fish conservation on a large scale, based on coordination at local, state, and federal levels while recognizing the importance of recreation and multiple economic river uses. The result of that meeting is the Native Fish Conservation Area designation that highlights river basins with a focus on stream conservation, paired with compatible recreational and commercial uses, with the end goal of ensuring the long-term survival of native aquatic animals.

The Little Tennessee River basin stretches from North Georgia, across North Carolina, and into Tennessee, and includes the Little Tennessee, Tuckasegee, Oconaluftee, Nantahala, Tellico, and Cheoah Rivers, along with all their tributaries. It's home to more than 100 species of fish, and 41 aquatic animals considered rare at the federal or state level, including a handful found nowhere else in the world such as the Citico darter, smoky madtom, and Little Tennessee crayfish.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.